

## **Caseworker Face-to-Face Contact Requirements for Children and Juveniles in Out-of-Home Placement**

### **Background**

Regular and consistent face-to-face contacts by a child's caseworker that are focused on the goals established in the case plan directly impacts positive outcomes for children and juveniles, including the management of safety, timely achievement of permanence, and improved well-being.

### **Purpose**

This policy establishes the requirement for caseworkers to have face-to-face contact at least once each and every full calendar month with children and juveniles who are living in an out-of-home placement. Additionally, this policy directs agencies on how to document information about the caseworker's face-to-face contact in eWiSACWIS.

There are no exceptions to this policy since it implements a federal law.

Agencies must ensure all actions of either agency or contract provider staff comply with this policy.

### **Definition of Caseworker**

"Caseworker" means the social worker or other professional staff person, under ss. 48.067, 48.069, 938.067, and 938.069, Stats., assigned by the agency to provide general case supervision, to make child removal and placement decisions, or to provide case management for a child under the care or supervision of the agency.

Caseworker can include, but is not limited to, a tribal caseworker, facility caseworker, treatment foster care caseworker, out-of-state caseworker, collaborative caseworker, contracted staff, or contracted aftercare staff.

Agencies may use other professional staff as designees to complete the face-to-face contacts. These professional staff include those who are trained to assess safety, facilitate permanence, ensure a child's well-being, and evaluate the progress of a child and family's case. *Examples of child welfare workers that do not qualify as appropriate designees are Guardian ad Litem or foster parent.*

### **Court-Ordered Out-of-Home Placements of Indian Children**

Section 46.261, Stats., allows a county to fund an out-of-home placement ordered by a tribal court, providing that the county and tribe enter into a 161 Agreement. Those tribal court-ordered placements under a 161 Agreement are subject to the face-to-face contact requirement and must be performed by the county agency unless the tribe and county include alternative language in a 161 Agreement, MOU or contract delineating responsibilities for the contacts. (Note: On and after July 1, 2008, the appropriate citation for such agreements is s. 48.645(2)(a)4., Stats.)

For additional guidance regarding face-to-face contact for counties and tribes who are jointly serving a child, refer to Appendix C.

Applicability

- I. The caseworker face-to-face contact requirement applies to all children and juveniles in out-of-home placement including those placed through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (s. 48.63, Stats.) and children and juveniles who are over 18 years of age if the agency maintains placement and care responsibility under a court order and the child or juvenile is in an out-of-home setting listed below:
  - court-ordered kinship care,
  - foster family home (relative or non-relative),
  - pre-adoptive home,
  - receiving home,
  - unlicensed relative or non-relative placement,
  - group home,
  - shelter care (including Reception Center and Reception Center – Shelter),
  - residential care centers for children and youth,
  - a trial reunification,
  - supervised independent living.
  - missing from out-of-home care (previously documented as AWOL/Runaway)
- II. Children who are in the out-of-home placements listed below are not subject to the face-to-face contact requirement in this policy except as described in the paragraph below:
  - voluntary kinship care,
  - juvenile correctional institutions,
  - adult corrections,
  - secure detention (including Reception Center – Detention),
  - hospitals.

If a child or juvenile is placed in an out-of-home care setting listed in Section I and is subsequently moved to an out-of-home setting listed in Section II without discharge between those out-of-home settings, the caseworker must continue to conduct monthly face-to-face contacts with the child or juvenile.

Refer to Appendix B for a chart illustrating the caseworker face-to-face requirement for children and juveniles in various placement settings.

### Children Missing from Care

Caseworkers should continue to make efforts to locate the child or juvenile and have contact with the child or juvenile upon their return according to the “Children Missing From Out-of-Home Care” policy and should document these in the child’s case record. This policy is located at

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num\\_memos/2008/2008-12.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/2008/2008-12.pdf)

### Caseworker Face-to-Face Contact Requirement

Each child or juvenile in an out-of-home placement must have at least one face-to-face contact with his or her caseworker in each and every full calendar month the child or juvenile is in out-of-home care. The majority (greater than 50%) of the face-to-face contacts must be in the child or juvenile’s out-of-home placement.

Caseworker face-to-face contacts must be focused on the safety, permanence, and well-being of the child and must be of substance and duration sufficient to address the goals of the case plan. Content of the contacts must be documented in accordance with the Documentation requirement below.

For Child Protective Services cases, refer to the requirements in the “Face-to-Face Contacts with Children and Families Following the Initiation of Ongoing Services” policy issued in DCFS Memo 2005-10 for additional requirements. That Standard can be accessed directly at the following link:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num\\_memos/2005/2005-10attach.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/2005/2005-10attach.pdf)

If the Department or a county department designates other caseworkers (residential staff, treatment foster care caseworker, out-of-state agency caseworkers for Wisconsin children placed in other states) to be responsible for visits with the child or juvenile, the county or Department caseworker primarily responsible for the child or juvenile should have face-to-face contact with the child or juvenile on at least a quarterly basis.

For cases involving the interstate placement of children or juveniles, visits must occur each and every month and should be conducted by the agency responsible for supervision under the ICPC agreement for that child or juvenile; generally the receiving state or a private agency caseworker under contract with the receiving state. The sending state is responsible for documenting the visits in eWiSACWIS. Under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, the visiting agency is required to submit a supervision report every six months; however, in practice, ICPC supervision reports are generally received every three months. Agencies may want to request a report about any visits during the final quarter of the federal fiscal year (July, August, and September) by the last week of October in order for those visits to be entered in eWiSACWIS and counted in the data submitted to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). If the sending agency is not receiving the documentation from the receiving state, they should contact the

assigned Deputy Compact Administrator at DCF as soon as a problem is detected. The Deputy Compact Administrator will work with the receiving state to address the issue.

#### Quality of Face-to-Face Contacts

The federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 requires monthly contacts to be well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure safety, permanence, and well-being of children. It is important to make face-to-face contacts purposeful and meaningful in order to promote positive outcomes for children. The ultimate intent of face-to-face contacts is to monitor safety and to provide services to promote permanency and the well-being of the child, the child's family, and the child's caregivers. For this reason, it is critical that documentation reflects and supports the content of monthly contacts.

In the monthly contact a caseworker's face-to-face contact with a child or juvenile may include or address the following topics:

- Safety
  - Ongoing assessment of safety of the child and, if applicable, community
  - Child or juvenile's behavioral risk(s), including risk to self and risk to others
- Stability/Adjustment of child or juvenile in:
  - Current living arrangement (e.g., biological home, foster home, group home, RCC, incarceration)
  - Educational setting
  - Alternative setting (e.g., non-custodial parent, respite care)
- Status of child's well-being:
  - Physical health
  - Learning and Development: educational program attendance, progress, and IEP (if applicable)
  - Mental health needs (e.g., emotional development and behavioral functioning)
- Progress towards planning goals/outcomes, permanence goals, and court orders:
  - Tracking progress on achieving outcomes
  - Adjustment of strategies/intervention(s) when needed.
  - Life Skills Development and Independent Living Transition planning for youth aged 15 or older.
- Family interactions and relationships
  - Frequency of contact/communication and with whom
  - Type of contact/communication and with whom
  - Quality of contact/communication and with whom
- An opportunity to engage in private communications with the caseworker regarding the out-of-home placement and any other concerns.

### Documentation

The caseworker's monthly face-to-face contacts with a child or juvenile must be documented in eWiSACWIS as a case note. The case note must include, at a minimum, the following information describing the face-to-face contact:

1. The date, time, and duration of the visit
2. The participants involved
3. The location of the visit
4. The type of contact
5. The purpose of the contact
6. A summary of the results of the contact

The Department or county department must document the information listed above in eWiSACWIS within 20 working days after the face-to-face contact with the child or juvenile regardless of whether the visits were conducted by the Department or county department caseworker or his or her designee.

Refer to Appendix A for an explanation of how multiple visits within one calendar month will be calculated for reporting purposes.

The "How Do I Guide" that provides direction about how to enter a case note to meet the Federal mandate on monthly case worker contacts with children and juveniles in out-of-home care in eWiSACWIS can be accessed electronically at the following link:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/quick-ref-guides/quick-reference-guides.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/quick-ref-guides/quick-reference-guides.htm)

Specific information about caseworker contact documentation is found under the "Documenting Monthly Caseworker Contacts" link in the Narrative Section.

For additional explanation and guidance regarding documentation of the use of shelter and secure detention settings, refer to the Secure Detention and Shelter Care sections of the Out-of-Home Placement Manual located at

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/placement-manual/plcm\\_manual.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/placement-manual/plcm_manual.htm)

Agencies using contracted staff to conduct face-to-face contacts with children and juveniles in out-of-home care should develop a process with those agencies to ensure that the primary agency receives the information necessary to document the contacts as required above.

## **Appendix A**

### **eWiSACWIS Quick Reference Guide: Documenting Monthly Caseworker Contacts**

#### Introduction

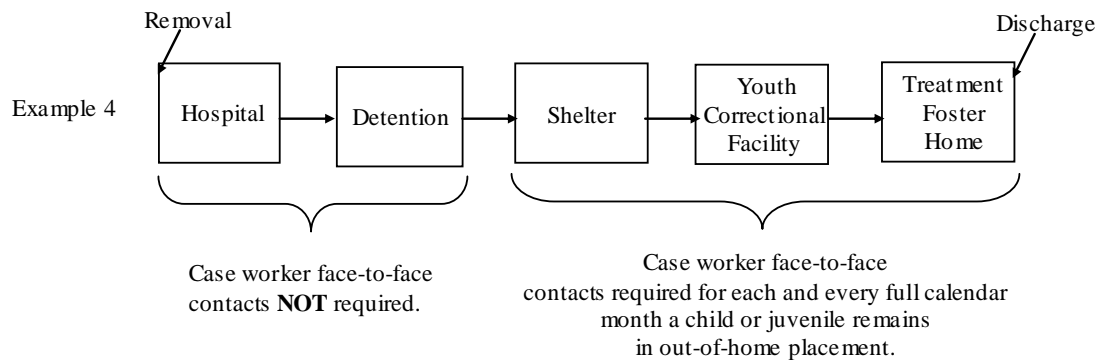
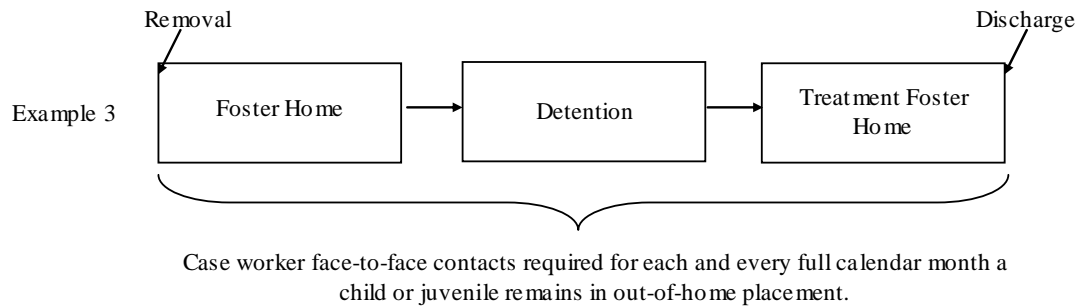
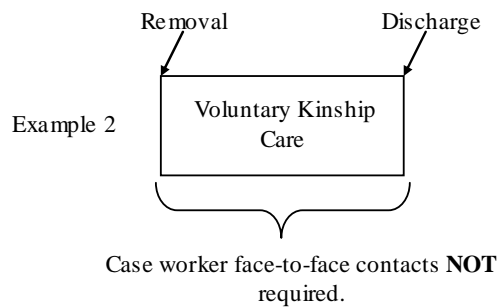
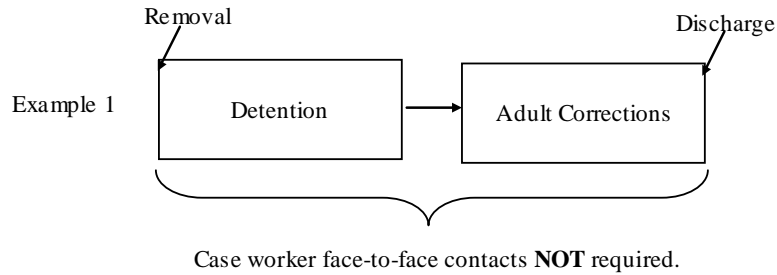
This is a guide on how to enter a case note to meet the federal mandate on monthly caseworker contacts with children and juveniles in out-of-home care. The following five data elements must be included in order for a case note documenting a face-to-face contact to be included in the count of those submitted for federal reporting purposes:

1. To count as a successful caseworker contact for a particular month, the “Date” on the case note must be during that calendar month.
2. To count as a successful caseworker contact for a particular child, that child **MUST** be selected as a participant on the case note.
3. You may choose any ‘Category’ on the case note, but the ‘Type’ must be either “Face-to-Face ” or “Initial Face-to-Face” fields.
4. The note **MUST** have a value selected for the “Face-to-Face Location” drop-down. To count as a successful caseworker contact, any value except ‘Not Applicable’ can be chosen.
5. To count as a successful caseworker contact, “Occurred” must be chosen for the “Face-to-Face Result.”

## Appendix B

### Examples of Case Worker Face-to-Face Contact Requirements by Placement Setting

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# F.A.Q. – Recording & Reporting Face-to-Face Contacts

## Appendix C

### **Report Related Questions and Answers**

#### **Q1: How do I access my county's monthly caseworker contacts information?**

**A1:** The CM06x100 Caseworker Contacts Report has been created to assist counties, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and the state adoption program, hereafter referred to as "Child Welfare (CW) agencies" in monitoring performance related to this requirement. This report allows CW agencies to identify their missing caseworker contacts and assess their agency's performance on a month-by-month and cumulative basis. This report can be accessed via eWReports. If you do not have the ability to access this report, work with your eWiSACWIS security delegate to obtain access to the report.

In addition, the CM06x102 Caseworker Contacts Monitoring Report is available to monitor contacts that have or have not occurred in a given time period. This report is run weekly but is also available for On-Demand use for a requested time period. This report does not provide the compliance on the Federal Fiscal Year percentage requirement.

There is also a caseworker contacts dashboard located on the DCF website which provides interactive data for each county's performance on this measure. The dashboard is located at: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/dashboards/well-being/caseworker/caseworker-contacts.htm>.

#### **Q2. Is it still possible to clean up any data entry errors pertaining to the Caseworker Contacts that occurred anytime during the Federal Fiscal Year?**

**A2.** Yes. Correctly documenting case note contacts will positively affect an agency's performance figures for the period in which the contacts occurred. The next time the report is run; the performance figures will reflect any new data that was entered correctly for a given child. The most important factors associated with the correct documentation for case note contacts are as follows:

- the Date;
- the Type (Face-to-Face), and;
- the Participant (selection of the child in out-of-home care, as well as any other relevant participants).

#### **Q3. How do kids missing from their out-of-home placements affect the overall number pertaining to our required face-to-face contacts?**

**A3.** Children who are in a documented Missing From Out-of-Home Care placement are included in the population of children requiring contact. The federal calculation requires the inclusion of children missing from care. However, if the child is not located or able to be contacted during a given period, a face-to-face contact will not be documented for that child. Practice expectations



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associated with efforts to locate a child missing from care are provided in the DCFS Memo Series 2008-12, Definition of Missing From Out-of-Home Care and Documentation Requirements at the following website:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num\\_memos/2008/2008-12.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/2008/2008-12.pdf).

**Q4. We need to document a case note contact for a child that was already TPR'd from his family case. What do I do?**

**A4.** On the Case Notes page, check the View Inactive Participants checkbox to see any participants that are currently in an inactive status.

**Q5. How do kids in Hospital/Corrections type of out-of-home placements affect the overall number pertaining to our required face-to-face contacts?**

**A5.** Hospitals, Corrections, Youth Corrections, Juvenile Corrections, Adult Corrections, Detention, Secure Detention (including Detention Center-Reception) all fall into a category of "episode dependent placements." These types of placements, although documented as an Out-of-Home Placement in eWiSACWIS, are **not** considered part of a defined placement episode for these reporting purposes unless they are preceded by a qualified placement (e.g. an Out-of-Home Placement such as a foster home, group home, RCC placement,).

Please see Appendix D for further information and examples regarding how the various placement settings documented on the Out of Home Placement page are used to determine compliance with this federal requirement.

For further information and example scenarios of qualified placement episodes vs. non-qualified placement episodes, please refer to Appendix B.

**Q6: How long does a child need to be in care for the month to count in the statistics?**

**A6:** The report looks for the first and last full calendar month a child is in an out-of-home care setting that counts. For example, if a child enters care October 4<sup>th</sup> and remains in placement through November 30<sup>th</sup>, the report will not look for a monthly face-to-face contact until November which is the first full calendar month the child has been in placement.

However, the frequency of caseworker contacts with children in out-of-home care is guided by specific policy as outlined in this policy and the caseworker-parent/family face-to-face contact policy in DCFS Memo Series 2005-10:

[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num\\_memos/2005/2005-10.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/2005/2005-10.htm)

**Q7. When do my face-to-face contacts need to be entered for the federal fiscal year (FFY)?**

**A7.** The policy requires that contacts are entered within 20 working days of the date of the contact.

## F.A.Q. – Recording & Reporting Face-to-Face Contacts

### **Policy Related Questions and Answers**

#### **Q8: How does the requirement apply when the Department of Corrections (DOC) is providing aftercare?**

**A8:** Similar to when a private agency is involved and the CW agency is considering this private provider as a “designee,” it is up to the CW agency to request the assigned DOC staff to provide necessary information on visits to meet the requirement. The CW agency is responsible for communicating this expectation, i.e. provision of monthly contact documentation, with DOC and private provider and for ensuring this documentation is entered as an eWiSACWIS case note for a given child.

#### **Q9: How does the requirement apply when a child is in shelter or detention as a service (sanction)?**

**A9:** When a child or juvenile is living at home, but is given a sanction to detention or shelter, that service is not considered an out-of-home placement and therefore, a monthly caseworker contact is not required; this service may not be documented on the Out of Home Placement page, but can be documented on the Service page in eWiSACWIS. However, when a child or juvenile is placed in OHC and subsequently given a sanction, the child remains in OHC status and therefore, the monthly caseworker contact requirement continues to apply. Note: Whether a child or juvenile is in-home or out-of-home, any sanctions are documented as “Services.” See the [eWiSACWIS Placement Documentation Manual](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/placement-manual/plcm_manual.htm) at the following website:  
[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge\\_web/training/placement-manual/plcm\\_manual.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wisacwis/knowledge_web/training/placement-manual/plcm_manual.htm)

#### **Q10: If a juvenile is in a foster home then goes to detention and is waiting for the court to reach disposition, which can be a long time, is monthly contact required?**

**A10:** If the juvenile was in a placement setting that counts for inclusion in this measure, e.g. a foster home, group home or RCC setting, prior to going to detention, monthly contact is required for the duration of the placement episode, including the period the child is in a detention placement setting.

#### **Q11: Can the summary/narrative field in eWiSACWIS say “see note in file”?**

**A11:** No. The caseworker’s monthly face-to-face contacts with a child or juvenile must be documented in eWiSACWIS as a case note. The eWiSACWIS case note must include a summary of the face-to-face contact.

#### **Q12: If I enter my case note incorrectly, can the summary/narrative field in eWiSACWIS say “see other note” when I correct it (i.e., forgot to pick the appropriate participant or drop down)?**

**A12.** Yes.

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**Q13: Can teleconferencing or videoconferencing be used to meet the monthly face-to-face contact requirement?**

**A13:** No. Teleconferencing and videoconferencing do not constitute face-to-face contact.

**Q14: How does the requirement apply if a child is in a hospital or psychiatric setting under Chapter 51?**

**A14:** If the child enters a psychiatric hospital under Chapter 51 and will subsequently return home, the child's stay is not documented as an out-of-home placement and monthly contact during the hospital stay is not required.

If the hospital placement, or any other "episode dependent setting" such as detention or correctional facilities, is part of the out-of-home care episode, then monthly contact is required during the hospital or secure facilities placement.

**Q15: Can tribes enter caseworker contacts in eWiSACWIS?**

**A15:** Yes; tribes have been given access and have the technical capacity to enter case notes. It is recommended that CW agencies and tribes continue to work together to ensure monthly contact information is updated in a timely manner. It is recommended that this information be included in the 161 Agreement.

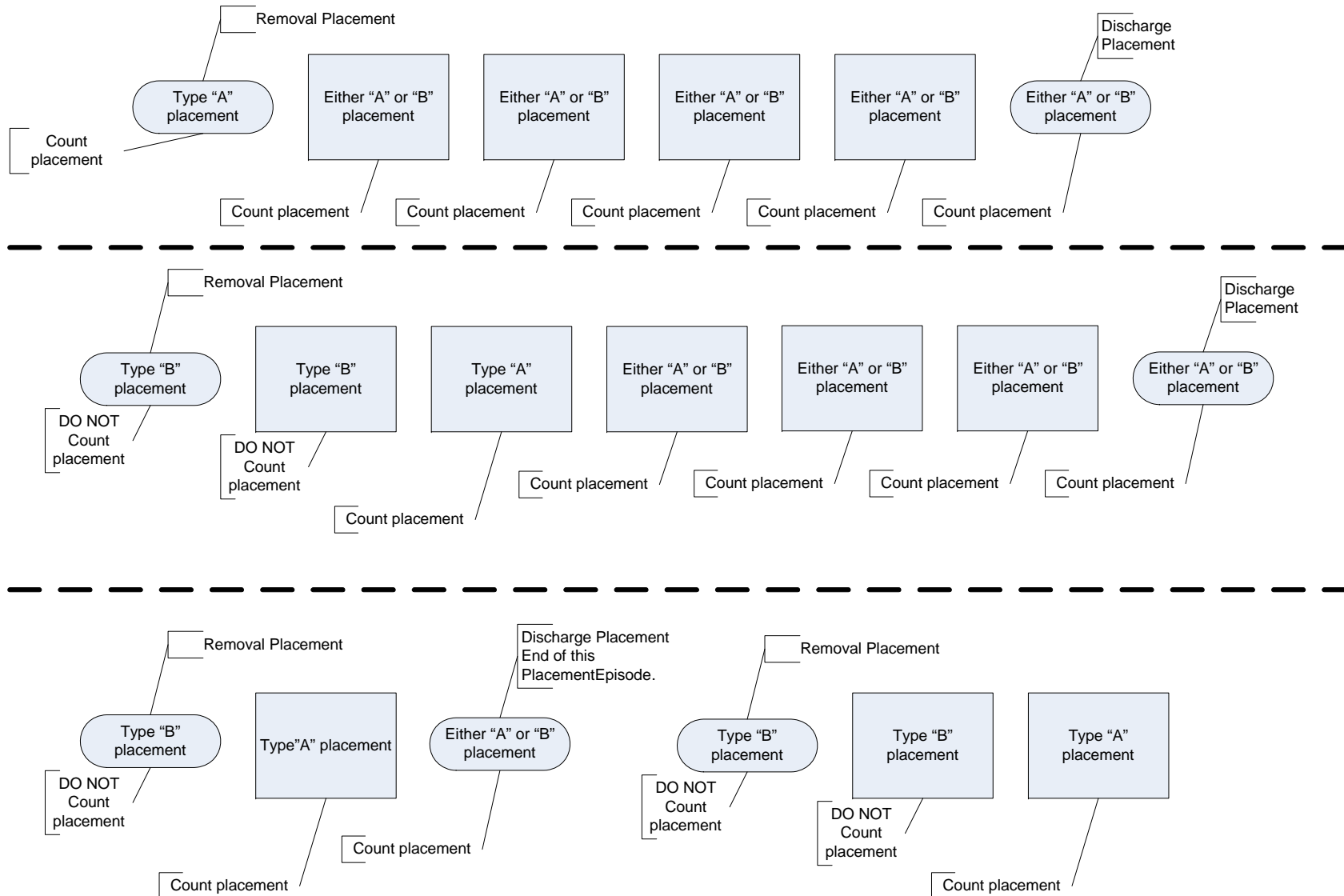
## Appendix D

### Placement Episode Scenarios

Type "A" Placements: Treatment/Foster Home, Group Home, RCC, Shelter, Court Ordered Kinship, Relative Care, Missing From Out of Home Care, Trial Reunification, Supervised Independent Living, Pre-Adoptive Home, Receiving Home, etc.

Type "B" Placements:

Hospital, Corrections, Juvenile Correctional Institution, Detention, Secure Detention, Reception Center – Detention, Adult Corrections



## Detailed Placement Episode Examples

